

Science on the Hill: Turning windows into solar panels

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by Victor Klimov

Sunlight is abundant, free and for all practical purposes, eternal. Harvesting that light with photovoltaic cells, which convert sunlight into electricity, at a cost-competitive price, however, has proved elusive. While the price of solar cells recently has plummeted and their efficiency has gone up, challenges remain around siting vast arrays of solar-electric panels and finding ways to integrate them into buildings and other applications.

These challenges prompted a joint research team from the Center for Advanced Solar Photophysics at Los Alamos National Laboratory and the University of Milano-Bicocca in Italy to try a fresh approach to solar power. Working with intriguing materials called quantum dots, the team achieved a breakthrough in solar-concentrating technology.

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Los Alamos National Laboratory

www.lanl.gov

(505) 667-7000

Los Alamos, NM

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